

The Forest Republican.

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The Forest Republican.

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BUSINESS DIRECTORY.

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THE COST OF A TRAIN.

At the time when the first open court of law was established in Russia, a lady, dressed with the utmost elegance, was walking on the Moscow promenade, leaning upon her husband's arm, and letting the long train of her rich dress sweep the dust and dirt of the street.

A young officer, coming hastily from a side street, was so careless as to catch one of his spurs in the lady's train, and in an instant a great piece was torn out of the costly but frail material of the dress.

"I beg a thousand pardons, madam," said the officer with a polite bow, and then was about to pass on, when he was detained by the lady's husband.

"You have insulted my wife." "Nothing was farther from my intention, sir. Your wife's long dress is to blame for the accident, which I sincerely regret, and I beg you once more to receive my apologies for any carelessness on my part." Thereupon he attempted to hasten on.

"You shall not escape so," said the lady, with her head thrown back in a spirited way. "To-day is the first time I have worn this dress, and cost two hundred rubles which you must make good."

"My dear madam, I beg you not to detain me. I am obliged to go on duty at once. As to the two hundred rubles—I really cannot help the length of your dress, yet I beg your pardon for not having been more cautious."

"You shall not stir, sir. That you are obliged to go on duty is nothing to us. My wife is right; the dress must be made good." The officer's face grew pale.

"You force me to break through the rules of the service, and I shall receive punishment." "Pay the two hundred rubles and you are free."

The quickly changing color in the officer's face betrayed how inwardly disturbed he was; but stepping close up to both of them, he said, with apparent self-command, "You will renounce your claim when I tell you that I am—a poor man, who has nothing to live on but his officer's pay, and the amount of that pay hardly reaches the sum of two hundred rubles in a whole year. I can, therefore, make no amends for the misfortune except by again begging your pardon."

"Oh! anybody could say all that; but we'll see if it's true; we'll find out if you have nothing but your pay. I declare myself not satisfied with your excuses, and I demand my money," persisted the lady, in the hard voice of an unfeeling woman.

"That is true—you are right," the husband added, dutifully supporting her. "By good luck we have the open court just now in session. Go with us before the judge and he will decide the matter."

All further protestation on the officer's part that he was poor, that he was expected on duty, and so forth, did not help matters. Out of respect for his uniform and to avoid an open scene, he had to go with them to the court room, where the gallery was densely packed with a crowd of people.

After waiting for some time the lady had leave to bring her complaint. "What have you to answer to this complaint?" said the judge turning to the officer, who seemed embarrassed and half in despair.

"On the whole very little. As the lateness of the hour, and being required on duty, compelled me to hurry, I did not notice this lady's train, which was dragging on the ground. I caught one of my spurs in it, and had the misfortune to tear the dress. Madam would not receive my excuses, but perhaps now she might find herself more disposed to forgiveness, when I again declare, so help me God, that I committed this awkward blunder without any mischievous intention, and I earnestly beg that she will pardon me."

There ran through the rows of people a murmur of indignation that sounded like a rushing of water. "Consider, complainant, the consequences of your demand. The defendant can be punished only through being deprived of his personal liberty, and by that you could obtain no satisfaction, while to the defendant it might prove the greatest injury in his rank and position as an officer, and especially as he is an officer who is poor and dependent upon his pay. Do you still insist upon your complaint?"

"I still insist upon it." The course the affair was taking seemed to become painful to the lady's husband. He spoke with his wife urgently, but as could be seen by the way she held up her head and the energy with which she shook it, quite uselessly. The judge was just going on to further consideration of the case, when a loud voice was heard from the audience:

"I will place the two hundred rubles at the service of the defendant." There followed a silence, during which a gentleman forced his way through the crowd and placed himself by the young officer's side.

"Sir, I am the Prince W—, and beg you will oblige me by accepting the loan of the two hundred rubles in question."

"Excuse, I am not worthy of your kindness, for I don't know if I shall ever be able to repay the loan," answered the young man, in a voice tremulous with emotion.

"Take the money, at all events. I can wait until you are able to return it." Thereupon the prince held out two notes of a hundred rubles each, and coming up to him, whispered a few words very softly. There was a sudden lighting up of the officer's face. He immediately took the two notes, and, turning toward the lady, handed them to her with a polite bow.

"I hope, madam, you are satisfied. With a malicious smile she reached out her hand for the money. "Yes, now I am satisfied."

With a scornful glance over the crowd of spectators, she prepared to leave the court room on her husband's arm. "Stop, madam," said the officer, who had suddenly become like another man, with a firm and confident manner.

"What do you want?" The look that the young woman cast upon him was as insulting as possible. "I want my dress," he answered, with a slight but still perfectly polite bow.

"Give me your address, and I will send it to you." "Oh no, my dear madam, I am in the habit of taking my purchases with me at once. Favor me with the dress immediately."

A shout of approbation came from the gallery. "Order!" cried the judge. "What an insane demand!" said the lady's husband. "My wife cannot undress herself here."

"I have nothing to do with you, sir, in this matter, but only with the complainant. Be so good, madam, as to give me the dress immediately. I am in a great hurry; my affairs are urgent, and I cannot wait another minute longer."

The pleasure of the audience at the expense of the lady increased with every word, until it was hard to force any approach to quiet, so that either party could be heard. "Do not jest any more about it. I will hurry, and send you the dress as soon as possible."

"I am not jesting. I demand from the representative of the law my own property—that dress," said the officer, raising his voice. The judge, thus appealed to decided promptly.

"The officer is right, madam. You are obliged to hand him over the dress on the spot." "I can't undress myself here before all these people, and go home without any dress on," said the young woman with anger and tears.

After he had written the draft the worthy pair withdrew, amidst hisses from the audience. Query: Did the lady ever again let her train sweep the streets?

What Has Become of the Singers?

We can remember the time (and we are not yet octogenarians), when a congregation that could not readily furnish a generous number of individuals, of both sexes, with strong, robust voices for its voluntary choir, was not known. We do not speak of the quality of the voices, nor the degree of musical proficiency to which the possessors of them had attained, but the ability to produce a loud and by no means disagreeable sound was not wanting, nor the intelligence to modify and improve that sound.

At the present time, however, all this seems to have changed. The general, indeed we may say, the universal, report from organists or choirmasters is to the effect that the material from which to form church choirs is so limited as to make any attempt to do so almost, if not quite, impossible.

We do not mean to say that owing to an improved musical taste in congregations generally, the material to be had is incapable of being trained to a point of excellence sufficiently high to meet modern requirements. Such a state of things would not be very surprising. But the difficulty experienced is not of this nature. The voices are not to be found. They seem to have passed quite away—to have disappeared gradually, year by year, until now we could name, in this city alone, more than one church in which it is next to impossible to find four voices of sufficient strength to sing a quartette so that it can be heard distinctly in every part of the edifice.

The fact is a striking one certainly, but we believe it is only true. From one cause or another, a steady deterioration of the voice is taking place in Canada and the Northern States of the Union. Whether this deterioration is attributable to the climate, the modes of living, or the manner in which vocal music is generally taught nowadays as compared with that of twenty years ago, is a question deserving serious consideration. If traceable to our trying climate there is probably no help for it; but if it can be shown that either of the two other causes suggested, or, in fact, any other remediable cause, is working this evil, earnest attention to the subject cannot be given to soon.

It is a noticeable feature in the case that this absence of strength of voice is much more observable among the young and growing members of the congregation than among their parents, or persons of the same age. This fact may, perhaps, afford a clue to the solution of the problem.

The Fence Story.

A man who prided himself on his morality, and expected to be saved by it, was constantly saying, "I am doing pretty well on the whole. I sometimes get mad and swear, but then I am perfectly honest. I work on Sunday when I am particularly busy, but I give a good deal to the poor, and I never was drunk in my life." The man hired a canny Scotchman to build a fence around his pasture lot. He gave him very particular directions. In the evening, when the Scotchman came in from work, the man said:—"Well, Jack, is the fence built, and is it tight and strong?" "I canna say it is all tight and strong," Jack replied, "but it's a good average fence, anyhow. If some parts of it are a little weak, other parts are extra strong. I don't know but I may have left a gap here and there, a yard or so wide; but then I made up for it by doubling the number of rails on each side of the gap. I dare say that the cattle will find it a good fence on the whole, and will like it, though I canna just say that it is perfect in every part."

"What!" cried the man, not seeing the point, "Do you tell me that you built a fence around my lot with weak places in it, and gaps in it? Why you might as well have built no fence at all. If there is one opening, or a place where an opening can be made, the cattle will be sure to find it, and will all go through. Don't you know man, that a fence must be perfect, or it is worthless?" "I used to think so," said the dry Scotchman, "but I hear you talk so much about averaging matters with the Lord, it seemed to me that we might try it with the cattle. If an average fence will not do for them, I am afraid an average character will not do on the day of judgment."

Forty different sewing machines received the "highest award" at the Centennial. They are getting short of water in New York, but as there is plenty of whiskey still, no trouble is anticipated.

A CHIP OF THE OLD BLOCK.

The other day a sharp Beard of Trade operator living up on the West Side met the proprietor of an adjacent beer saloon, who said to him: "Helle, you given up drinking lager for your dinner some more, now, don't you?" "No," replied the operator; "But I buy it at another saloon."

"But why?" continued the dealer in beer. "Well, if you must know the truth," said the operator, "it was because you always gave short change. If I sent you a quarter for 14 cents' worth of the beer that cheers, and, if taken in sufficient quantities, inebriates, I never got more than 9 cents' change." "What?" said the saloon keeper; "no give short change? Why, you never sent the right change; when you sent pennies there was always one or two short. So help me gracious if it wasn't." "I always sent you the precise amount—I hope to be cornered if I didn't," said the dealer; "besides you got to given awfully small measure; why, I could have drunk the quart of beer you sent till I died of thirst."

"Short measure?" answered the publican indignantly; "when I began to find your change short I only gave the boy what he had money for." "Great Lyon," said the spectator, as a sudden light broke in upon him, and a cold sweat broke out upon him, "I want to be caught short on the turn of the market, if that young reprobate hasn't been knocking down on both of us. It's clean case of straddle—a regular spread, and, no matter whether he had whole money or small change, he was bound to make a margin. I'll take the hide off'n him when I get home, as sure as to a bountiful and overruling Providence is due the creation of the smaller sorts of apples."

"By Jimmy!" said the enthusiastic saloon-keeper admiringly, "but that's a smart boy, just like his father. Don't lick that boy, my friend, and before you die you'll be proud of him—you'll see him corner the market and fall for a million dollars, mark my words if you don't. Don't lick him!" But the angry father said he would. When he got home and informed his wife—who is a devoted temperance woman—that their offspring was a liar and a thief, and that he intended to thrash him till (metaphorically speaking) the cows came home, she said coldly: "You will not. If, as he probably has, he has practiced the arts of dishonesty and deception, you should remember that they are but the legitimate and inevitable outcome of your training and example. You put a beer can into his hand to steal away his principles, and what more natural than that he should lie and steal? What does the Bible say about it? (This knocked him, as it were.) 'Cursed is every one that putteth his jug into his children's hands, and upon their children's children, unto the third and fourth generations, with sorrow to the grave. Selah!'"

He was much impressed, if not wholly convinced, but said he would lick the son on general principles, whereupon his wife solemnly affirmed that if he did she would go to her father and tell him (the father) that he (the husband) did nothing but guzzle beer and talk with saloon-keepers, and beat and abuse his family from week's end to week's end. And as his father-in-law is a good man to know when demands are made for more margin, the broker had to let the boy go unlicked of paternal justice. But (such are the contradictions of women!) when next day the boy lost—and he didn't knock it down—one cent of the change out of a quarter she gave him to go and get a spool of thread with, she, on her own unsupported and wholly unfounded presumption, compelled the father to lick that boy. The father protested vainly, but made his conscience easy by the reflection that he was giving the boy a licking for his previous offense.

"What is that man yelling at?" asked an Illinois farmer of his boy, as he pointed to a person in the field one day this week. "What is he yelling at?" repeated the lad.

"Yes," replied the father inquiringly. "I know," said the boy. "Then what is it, you young rascal?" demanded the paternal.

"Why," chuckled the urchin, "he's—he's yelling at—at the top of his voice!" Then that cold-blooded husbandman placed violent hands on his irreverent offspring, and laid him over a gang-plow while he scolded him with a fork-stave.

Four bears have fallen before the rifle of one brain hunter in Juniata county this fall. What may be done at any time will be done at no time.